

**Irwin Hunter & Co.**

Western Australia's Leading Seed Distributor

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## "Safeguard ryegrass", a major tool in the fight against ARGT.

A self-regenerating highly productive annual ryegrass could be the final nail in the coffin for annual ryegrass toxicity, ARGT.

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Developed by Australian scientists with funding from the Meat Research Corporation (MRC), South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and Valley Seeds, the variety 'Safeguard' can convert low levels of



ARGT susceptible Wimmera ryegrass to a resistant ryegrass in one year.

Specifically developed for the drier conditions of Western Australia and parts of South Australia, Safeguard crossbreeds with the local ryegrass species such as Wimmera, to produce ARGT resistant seeds which germinate the following year.

"To produce a variety like Safeguard with such a high level of resistance that it can create ARGT resistant offspring in one generation is a phenomenal achievement in plant breeding," said Donald Coles, Managing Director of Valley Seeds.

"Farmers have demanded such a variety and with outstanding breeding by Dr. Alan McKay of SARDI, we were able to deliver."

Safeguard offers both the livestock producer and cropping farmer excellent characteristics.

In addition to spreading resistance to ARGV, the variety Safeguard has excellent winter pasture production and is resistant to the root disease Take-all. The ability to effectively clean the paddock of pasture grass before the cropping phase is essential and with good herbicide management this can be achieved with Safeguard.

"This high level of resistance to ARGV, combined with the qualities that meet the demands of broad acre crop production will be especially appreciated by the export hay producers," said Mr Coles.

To benefit from Safeguard's resistance to ARGV, seed reserves of local ryegrass must be reduced to less than 20 local ryegrass plants per square metre.

Trial results indicate that the minimum seeding rate for less than 20 local Wimmera plants per metre square is 6kg/ha but where there is more than 20 plants per metre square, increasing the seeding rate to 12kg/ha helps both in terms of feed production and second year re-generation.

Mr Coles also emphasised the importance of dry sowing Safeguard before the autumn break. This ensures early germination and that Safeguard will flower at a similar time to local Wimmera ryegrass plants.

To ensure that the pasture remains clear of ARGV susceptible species it is necessary to continue to sow only certified seed of Safeguard. This is especially important when re-sowing pasture after a cropping rotation.

A recent inspection of a paddock that was sown to Safeguard in autumn 2000 indicates no pure Wimmera has survived – "none of the ryegrass plants exhibited pure Wimmera traits". The population was either Safeguard or a Safeguard cross.

Safeguard is marketed by Valley Seeds Pty Ltd and good seed stocks will be available in Autumn 2004 from Western Australian distributor Irwin Hunter & Co. No uncertified farmer saved seed is permitted for this variety due to potential ARGV susceptible contamination that may occur.

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